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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 001784

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [MOPS](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: FARDC: LRA FORCES BELIEVED NO LONGER IN DRC;
MILITARY DEPLOYMENTS CONTINUE

REF: KINSHASA 1770

Classified By: PolOff CBrown, reasons 1.4 b/d.

1. (C) MONUC Political Officer Oleg Sepelev briefed PolOff October 26 regarding the presence of Lord's Resistance Army forces in the DRC, as well as recent reactions by the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC) and Ugandan People's Defense Forces (UPDF) to the LRA's activities. Sepelev said the FARDC and UPDF, after joint consultations October 25, reportedly agreed that LRA forces are not in the DRC and are now believed to be in southern Sudan.

2. (C) Sepelev said MONUC officials have been told by Ugandans they are satisfied with recent FARDC troop deployments (reftel) taken to counter the LRA's reported presence in the DRC. In addition, Uganda has dropped its previous request to have its own forces track the LRA on DRC territory, a proposal which had been firmly rejected by the FARDC. Sepelev characterized the relations between Uganda and DRC as "normalized" on the LRA issue, at least for the time being.

3. (C) As reported in reftel, MONUC is presently planning a joint operation with the FARDC to deal with any remaining problems with the LRA. MONUC is sending two companies to Aba to support the FARDC. Sepelev said MONUC is now also pressuring the FARDC to deploy some of its own troops from Aba to the Garamba Park area, where LRA forces have been known to operate in the past.

4. (C) MONUC Chief of Operations Lt. Col. Mamadou Sane told PolOff that in order to conduct adequate operations against any LRA forces found in the DRC, MONUC must continue to provide logistical and technical assistance to the FARDC. Sane said FARDC troops are far from being well trained to deal with the LRA and could not conduct such operations independently.

5. (C) Comment. Sepelev and Sane both appeared sincere in their conviction that the LRA had left DRC territory, repeatedly telling PolOff that both the FARDC and the UPDF were unequivocal in that belief. Moreover, both MONUC officials expressed enthusiasm with what appears to be a new sense of cooperation and normalization between the two countries, particularly given the level of tension between them during the past few weeks. Any re-entry of the LRA into the DRC (and failure of the FARDC to counter those forces) will certainly strain GDRC-GOU relations. End Comment.
MEECE